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Farm Broadcasters Letter

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States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

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April 17, 1992

MAJOR USDA REFORMS -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** told the Senate Agriculture Committee that Congress should join with him in making major reforms in the management and structure of USDA. Together they could structure a department that would serve the interests of the public well into the next century, he said. Madigan says changes he is making on his own are designed to streamline management, realign subcabinet duties and tighten field office operations that deliver billions of dollars of services to consumers and production agriculture. "I have repeatedly said I want my tenure at USDA to be one in which management is given special focus," Madigan says. **Contact: Roger Runningen** (202) 720-4623.

USDA IS A HUGE ORGANIZATION, Madigan says. Its \$62 billion annual outlays make it the 4th largest federal department, and its nearly 111,000 staff-year employees make it the 6th largest federal employer. Its annual budget is exceeded by only 17 foreign nations. Its size would rank 4th among U.S. corporations and its credit and lending services would make it one of the nation's largest banks. More than half of its budget supports food assistance programs. Nearly 40 percent of USDA's employees are in the Forest Service, which manages 191 million acres.

USDA'S ROLE IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING -- Its responsibilities are becoming much more complex, Madigan says. The 29 pages of the 1973 Farm Bill have grown into 719 pages in the 1990 Farm Bill. Twenty years ago, one-fourth of the budget was spent on food assistance, compared with more than half today. Peak employment was 125,185 staff-year employees in 1980, when the budget was \$25 billion; now with a budget two and-a-half times larger, the work is done by 15,000 fewer staff-year employees. And, nearly 70 percent of the USDA workforce is now engaged in activities other than administering farm programs.

WASHINGTON AG WATCH -- This year farm broadcasters will coordinate their annual Washington Ag Watch with the 1992 U.S. Ag Communicators Congress in the nation's capital in June. The NAFB event will begin on Thursday, June 25, with a reception in the USDA Patio and run through June 27. The Communicators Congress will be held June 28 through July 1. **Washington Ag Watch Contact: Taylor Brown** (406) 252-6661. **USACC Contact: (202) 785-6717.**

FARM LABOR -- During the week of March 8 - 14, there were 286,000 hired workers on farms and ranches in the four states USDA survey -- California, Florida, New Mexico and Texas. Average March wage rates hired workers received ranged from \$5.13 an hour in Texas to \$6.80 an hour in California. **Contact: Tom Kurtz** (202) 690-3228.

LYNG HEADS MISSION -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** has named former Secretary **Richard E. Lyng** to lead a mission to the former Soviet Union to select agriculturally related industries where U.S. executives will be loaned as problem-solving consultants. Lyng was secretary from 1986 to 1989. The mission is scheduled for April 20 to May 3. The loaned executive program is part of a technical assistance package for the former Soviet Union announced by President **George Bush** in November. **Contact: Sally Klusaritz** (202) 720-3448.

JUNE IS FOR TURKEY LOVERS -- June has always been for brides, but now, it's for turkey lovers too, the National Turkey Federation says. This year's theme is "Turkey makes meals fast and fit. "For the last two years, June has been Turkey Lovers' Month and because the promotion has been so popular, the federation has again declared June as Turkey Lovers' Month in 1992." **Contact: Chin Chu Moon** (703) 435-7209.

POULTRY DISEASE VACCINE DEVELOPED -- USDA scientists have borrowed a gene from the live Marek's disease virus to create the first genetically engineered vaccine against this highly contagious disease of poultry. The new vaccine may be commercially available in about two years. It contains only the gene that promotes immunity to Marek's disease, rather than the whole virus. **Contact: Keyvan Nazerian** (517) 337-6828.

THIN IS NOT ALWAYS IN -- Young people approaching the teen years often become obsessed with achieving a perfect body, says **Beth Reames**, Extension Service nutritionist with the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center. "Unfortunately, dissatisfaction with one's body image can lead desperate teens to use such weight loss methods as diet pills, starvation diets and binge-eating and purging to achieve ultra-thinness." As many as 20 percent of adolescents may practice binge-eating followed by self-induced vomiting or other forms of purging. Reames says adults should know the danger signs of poor eating habits in teens. **Contact: Beth Reames** (504) 388-4141.

USDA HAS ROLE IN SUMMER OLYMPICS -- USDA officials want to make certain our animals don't bring back a deadly horse disease when they return from competing in the 1992 Summer Olympics. "To prevent the entry of African horse sickness into the United States, U.S. Equestrian Team horses competing in Barcelona must be quarantined for 60 days upon their return," says **Karen James** of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "Competitors also have the option of keeping their horses in a country free of African horse sickness for 60 days before returning to the United States." **Contact: Alan Zagier** (301) 436-7799.

*Editor: Marci Hilt Phone: (202) 720-6445
Fax: (202) 690-2165
Ag NewsFAX (202) 690-3944*

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1819 -- On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, **Brenda Curtis** pays a visit to some of the biggest ranches in Southwest Arizona. She gets a first-hand look at some of the major issues facing cattle ranchers today -- environment, debate over land use and, of course, grazing fees on public lands. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1301 -- U.S. foods at Euro Disney; revitalizing rural communities; reducing pesticide use with cotton; bugs are fun; your electric bill and appliances. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1810 -- USDA News Highlights; the new dairy initiatives; details on the disaster payments; new rangeland management techniques; water supply impacts pig growth. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1516 -- Locked-up lettuce; potent parsley; no-till rice; metabolism and dieting; hot dog safety. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., April 27, coverage of Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan's** address to the National Association of Ag Journalists; Tues., April 28, weekly weather and crop update; Wed., April 29, coverage of Madigan's testimony before the House Appropriations Committee; Thurs., April 30, ag prices, world tobacco situation; Fri., May 1, horticultural exports, catfish production, cattle and calf predator loss. **(These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)**

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on the changing role of USDA; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on at risk food safety; **Dave Luciani** reports on fooling nature.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** and **Walt Hill**, deputy under secretary for small community and rural development on rural economic development; USDA meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather and crops; USDA World Board chair **James Donald** on crop production; USDA soil scientist **Jeri Berc** on wind erosion damage.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on turf grass research; **Pat O'Leary** reports on secrets of the soil.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, **Saturdays** from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT, and **Mondays** from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

REFLECTIONS OF THE SOUTHWEST -- Vic Powell is off this week, so I thought I'd put down some of my thoughts concerning my recent travels to Arizona to produce material for USDA Radio programming. First off, we Easterners think of a big farm as 300 acres. So, when I visited the 20,000 acre ZR Hereford Ranch outside Tucson and the 8,000 acre Diamond C Ranch, my mouth was agape most of the time. The miles and miles of rocky hills dotted with cattle and lonely Saggorro pretty much tell the story of a mighty different life and way of raising cattle from the Eastern cousins. I now better understand those issues George Gatley (SW Ag Net) raises when we chat on the phone. Issues like grazing fees, land use and ranchers' protection of the land, are but a few I was able to explore with the ranchers I met. My bonnet is off to George because wherever I went in Arizona, people told me they listen to George Gatley because he's a true friend of the rancher and farmers of Arizona.

MARICOPA AG RESEARCH CENTER -- One hour outside Tucson is a \$10 million "farming in the desert" research facility that is a must to see if you're in the area.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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LORRAINE KINGDON -- (News editor, University of Arizona, Tucson) has a line-up of great stories for farm broadcasters. She's a neat lady that helped me line up a week full of ranching and research stories. Lorraine started her radio career in 1968 in New Jersey. She moved on to Idaho State where she went to work for Jim Johnson (USDA Radio-TV Chief, retired). She and I compared notes and both agreed Jim is playing golf in Washington State at least six days a week since his retirement from USDA. For unusual story ideas from the Southwest, call Lorraine at (602) 621-7176.

AGRIAMERICA Network in Indianapolis, Ind., now has 53 stations. WXLX 950 AM now airs several farm news and market reports each day.

MAX ARMSTRONG (WGN, Chicago) has recently been named to the position of Fire Commissioner in the western suburbs of Chicago. In his appointment, Max will help a department with 77 full-time firefighters working from five stations.

Brenda Curtis-Heiken

BRENDA CURTIS-HEIKEN

Acting Chief, Radio and TV Division